1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa



difference between friends'. Moreover, economic pressure can be brought to produce social conformity and curb the heretic. In the case of a shopkeeper whose private life was open to suspicion, he found that his customers had gradually deserted him, and he had to search for work in town. Part of the village efforts to establish a new mill were provoked not only by the raising of the charges by the owners, but also by the fact that one of them had been accused of fomenting intrigues between the villagers. This added fuel to the mill's campaign 'to ruin the house of such a man'.

No study of the fellah's nutrition and its connection with cultural values has been made. The following remarks about diet in Silwa are appropriate; they are, however, inadequate as such a question requires a special enquiry by itself.

The villager has no concept of a balanced diet apart from a filling or a delicious meal. Meals, especially dinners, are often better provided after the reaping of the new harvest when food would be plentiful, and meat could be bought, while gradually the meals become poorer and meat is rarely served. It is said that 'one good meal a year is a support like a stick' in justifying one expensive meal whenever possible. Moreover, bread is always preferred to be hot, 'just coming from the oven', which means an arduous task to the housewives, as the provision of cooked food is an important part of their matrimonial duties. One of my female relatives told me that she knows of two cases where a husband had to divorce his wife because she seldom provided him with freshly-baked bread or hot 'ghamoos'—a cooked vegetable in which he can dip the bread.

The preparation and cooking of a meal is associated largely with certain kinship and neighbourly obligations. Relatives might help each other in picking the odd stones or foreign matter from the seeds before sending them to the mill, help in sieving the flour or in baking. If a woman bakes her bread in a hot oven of a neighbour (a device for saving fuel), she has to offer one of the children a loaf of bread. Neighbours and relatives might borrow loaves of bread from a woman who has just baked. After baking, a woman may send a loaf or loaves of bread to a widowed relative or send a 'dwaga'—bread to be tasted—from the newly-harvested crop.

As a rule, the villagers take three meals a day—breakfast (fatour), lunch (ghada), and an evening meal, at sunset (asha). But farmers occasionally eat between the meals anything available, which they call 'ijalla', i.e. the food that does not precipitate the next meal.

An evening meal, especially a well-prepared one, is certainly the apex of the day's work, the reward and joy for the day's efforts and toil.[1] The gathering round the table—'tablia'—for the evening meal, reflects the family unity, its hierarchy, and its discipline. The father and the children sit on the mat or on the bed round the low table to eat from one dish. If there is meat, it is the father who distributes it, giving each child his or her share, a larger portion to the older boys and less to the younger, and the

[1] For such feeling and attitude towards food, see R. Firth, *We, The Tikopia*, p. 55.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa



to and decided by a Government superior to local sanctions, the esteem of local institutions has been undermined and the traditional structure of authority has lost some of its grip.

If the villagers have increasingly resorted to Government procedures in their disputes, they still consider both Government and Government officials as agencies of imposition and control, and hence to be feared. The identification of any Effendi wearing European suit and fez with a policeman is indicative of the role of the Government in the people's mind. The first strong impact of centralized Government was probably during the reign of Mohammed Ali, when its pressures were felt through conscription, the rigid collection of taxes, and the registration of land. For a long time in Egypt this apprehension held towards the Government was connected with education, since education and conscription were associated during the days of Mohammed Ali, while hitherto war had been the business of a certain caste and farmers were not concerned with it. The fear of Government authorities is reflected in the story of the old man in the village who had been very annoyed and did not speak to his son for a long time because the latter was entangled in a dispute for which the father had to be called to the police station to give evidence. The father considered his going to the police station as a humiliation brought to him by his son.

It is also considered as a betrayal to report cases of infectious diseases to the authorities, as this would cause trouble to the family by involving the father and the mother in governmental queries and procedures. To keep away from governmental institutions was always the safest policy. An example of this is the failure of the branch of the Agricultural Credit Bank established in 1938 to help the farmers to have their crops secured, to borrow money accordingly, and thus to rescue them from falling a prey to usury. The bank has been in fact mainly used by outside crop merchants to buy crops from the village and store them until prices improved. It only functioned to its full capacity during the last war when governmental legislation compelled every farmer to sell part of his crop to the Government according to the land he cultivated. The villagers have never taken to the benefits of the bank, partly because it involved becoming implicated with Government procedures, and partly because it implied loss of prestige, due to dealing with interest, which is religiously forbidden. For the same reason, life insurance is never entertained by the villagers, nor by a great section of the Egyptian society as a whole, partly because it involves interest, as well as because it presents a challenge to man's destiny. In 1950 the branch of the bank in the village had to be closed down. Yet this does not mean that usury is not practised amongst the villagers in Silwa in spite of being condemned by the Koran, although it is not widespread and is avoided as much as possible.[1]

[1] M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, in talking about the Koranic prohibition of 'riba' (increase, interest) in Moslem society remarks that 'it was in that very society . . . that

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa



Thus it is obvious that most of the Government institutions have not yielded the results expected from them in the village. So far the health unit, the agricultural bank, and the compulsory school have proved to be failures. This is mainly attributed to the lack of co-operation from the villagers as a result of the clash between their traditional views and practices and the new institutions, the purposes of which have never been explained or made comprehensible to the villagers.

It is appropriate here also to mention the ideal of hospitality which has been affected by the process of social change. The villagers regret the waning of the idea of hospitality defined in terms of ability to render it when the occasion arises. Hospitality is conceived also in terms of offering food to guests, relatives, or casual *en route* visitors to the village. It also involves distributing wealth on ceremonial occasions such as circumcision and wedding, the failure of which would subject a person to severe criticism. To be able to conform to these standards is one of the chief attributes of authority, prestige, self-respect, and social recognition. The ideal personality type, alongside with the pious man, is the hospitable man. The common saying runs: 'He who is hospitable will never suffer in this world.' The hospitable person should offer without being asked, and should insist when the receiver is reluctant to accept; otherwise his hospitality is like that of the boatmen—who, being uncertain of their food resources, cannot be hospitable. By offering hospitality a person in fact creates bonds between himself and the partakers, where the latter respond in terms of respect, service, reciprocal hospitality, or at least prayers, in the case of the poor. The ideal is certainly that of giving away, and not of accumulating. Those who accumulate without giving are described as 'rotting', or like the 'cord that holds the knickers'—implying that they are insignificant and socially unworthy of recognition.

This gradual dwindling of hospitality, so much deplored by the villagers, is mainly due to the fact that there are few families in the village who can afford to adopt the traditional ideal. This is certainly a result of the change in the economic structure of the village due to the constant division of land and the increase in population. Moreover, with increasing contacts with city ways, the villagers are more aware of the importance of money and the personal benefits derived from its purchasing power; and the recognition attached to hospitality, though upheld and valued as an ideal, is offset by the new acquisitive spirit. In this connection, my informant, Ali, told me that in the good old days if a visitor expressed his appreciation of an object or a utensil, the host usually offered it to him, but this is no longer the general rule. The spirit, however, still persists in the case of a woman visitor who, for instance, admires the tea offered to

there developed, in the 9th and 10th centuries, the banking institutions and commercial customs which were to become those of Europe, and which are quite inconsistent with the Quranic Law'. *Muslim Institutions* (translated from the French), London, 1950, pp. 190–1.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa



182 anxiety, weakening the stability that obtained in the traditional social
178 structure. My informant, Mahmoud, told me once, 'If the present people of Silwa find you writing a complaint to the Government against somebody, they will spontaneously offer their signature or their stamp without asking you about the nature of the complaint, or even against whom'. He went on to say, 'These people never learn a lesson. God sent them the malaria epidemic followed by the torrent that swept their harvest, but they never guard against God's anger, and they will go on eating each other's flesh.'

155 Such insecurity and anxiety is bound to have its repercussions upon the children as they grow up. Hearing remarks of dissatisfaction about the environment and the people in general from their elders, the children themselves feel insecure and become more suspicious.

178 To sum up, the folk life of the village has certainly undergone a certain amount of change from the point of view of what some anthropologists call the material culture, and the instruments of living. The villagers, for instance, are more familiar with pecuniary values and commercial transactions. More often than not, borrowing money at present is accompanied
● [426] by writing a receipt, while hitherto this was considered to be a social disgrace. Even at present, some creditors hand over the receipt to a third person to keep it as a sign of his reluctance to accept a written bond. Like Chan Kom, however, commercialism has not entered the primary family. The writer has not heard of sisters or brothers living together doing business with each other on a commercial basis, and it is almost inconceivable of a father hiring his son, or a son his father.[1]

[369] It is obvious that the villagers are keen to accept and imitate the material symbols of city life, and it is on the material level that the folk culture of the village has been relatively more exposed to the processes of social change. On the other hand, social structure and organization and values have not changed very much. Apart from the few unsatisfied deviants, the conceptual and social orientation of the village folk life still holds valid as the same principles that have guided conduct, behaviour, and relationships are still maintained. In this pattern of folk living, the focal point is undoubtedly religion, as it continues to be the validating force
[182] of life, explaining it, and providing people with their major intellectual and emotional satisfactions and dissatisfactions in coping with the problems of life.

[1] Robert Redfield, *A Village that Chose Progress (Chan Kom Revisited)*, p. 66.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa



the first two ceremonies, in covering the expenses incurred during the celebrations. It is known by the villagers that on such occasions one usually gains financially, as the person who is celebrating is paid back on one evening all that he had invested previously at different times, and thus it is a time for getting back one's savings.[1] Such reciprocal aid in these ceremonies does not make such enterprises a burdensome task in Silwa and in many other villages in the province of Aswan. This is different from the conditions obtaining in the province of Sharqiya. In 1940 Dr. Abbas Ammar reported that 11·8 of the indebtedness of the people of Sharqiya was due to expenses incurred on wedding celebrations.[2]

One often reads outright condemnation of such ceremonial celebrations which make many a fellah fall into debt. It must be remembered that the desire for the prestige connected with a sense of plenty as expressed in feasts and ceremonies is a natural human tendency. In this connection Freud says: 'A festival is a permitted, or rather an obligatory, excess, a solemn breach of a prohibition. . . . It is not that men commit the excess because they are feeling happy as a result of an injunction they have received. It is rather that excess is of the essence of a festival; the festive feeling is produced by the liberty to do what is as a rule prohibited.'[3]

It is not so important here whether one accepts Freud's argument or not; what is more vital is to realize that such ceremonial occasions provide the fellaheen with a healthy scope for the expressive elements in human behaviour and life in general, without which existence would become monotonous. To view such celebrations only as one of the main causes of the fellah's indebtedness, as some social reformers in Egypt do, ignores the social framework of valuations. Such ceremonies of circumcision, weddings, funerals, are occasions where the community gives reality to some of its social ideals and practices. They also act as a social mode of catharsis for the family and the individual concerned through which they acquire and satisfy what social psychologists call the 'sense of belonging' and the demands of group loyalty and morality.[4]

There is no doubt that the circumcision ceremony is a formal occasion for introducing the child into the wider circle of family relatives and to the whole village. This occasion is taken to express bonds of blood, affinal or friendly relationships between the family of the circumcised boy and other families. It is interesting to note that the boy's mother is the first and only female contributor in the announcement ceremony, and her contribution of corn, dates and sugar goes to the announcer. Other close relatives such as an uncle, or grandfather, have also to contribute on this

[1] This reminds the writer of one of Malinowski's findings showing that the ceremonial treatment of certain aspects of life, e.g. sex, crises of human existence, are more than the assertion of their social significance but also have a pragmatic value.

[2] Abbas M. Ammar, 'The People of Sharqiya', Ph.D. Thesis (Manchester University), 1940, pp. 408, 409.

[3] S. Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, London, 1950.

[4] See S. F. Nadel, *Foundations of Social Anthropology*, pp. 343–4.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

## APPENDIX III

| Average consumption is then: | | | *Price in £E* |
|---|---|---|---|
| One-half ardab of wheat per head | .. | .. | 3 |
| One-third ardab of barley per head | .. | .. | 1 |
| One-twelfth ardab of beans per head | .. | .. | 1 |
| Total | .. | .. | £E5 |

*For the Summer Crop:*

Two ardabs for husband
Two ardabs for wife (and chicken and sheep)
Half ardab for child

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Average consumption one and five-sixths ardabs | .. | 6.50 |
| Total expenditure on bread and beans | .. .. | £E11.50 |

Expenditure on manufactured and prepared goods:

| | *£E* |
|---|---|
| Clothes .. .. | 4 |
| Tea and sugar .. | 3 |
| Soap, kerosene, etc. .. | 1 |
| | £E19.50 |

The income or expenditure does not include items such as vegetables, e.g. onions and lentils, which are grown for home consumption. Yet two main items are not inserted: tobacco and meat. Meat purchases could be offset by the sale of chickens and eggs, but certainly the use of tobacco would raise the average consumption to £E20 at least.

It will be noticed that the expenditure on tea and sugar per head is proportionately large. Tea, with plenty of sugar in it, and no milk, is the fellah's main liquid intake, as he can drink tea at any time. It is almost one of the necessities of life in the village, and neither adults nor children seem to be able to do without it. Tea is taken at home and 'lubricates the mouths' in formal and informal gatherings outside dwellings and in guest houses. Two decades ago, Ali told me that food was the attraction of such gatherings, but now tea has become the fashion. It is a disgrace to omit to offer tea to a visitor. If while serving tea, or a meal for that matter, to a guest, another visitor arrives unexpectedly, the host is obliged to make another pot of tea for him, or at least insist orally on making it, perhaps later; otherwise, the latter would feel offended and consider that he was offered 'chance-tea' (sadaf), as such an offer is not considered hospitality.

Looking at the villager's budget of £E21 income and £E21 consumption, one can appreciate the precariousness of his financial solvency; and in case of misfortune his budget could be easily upset and cause him to fall into debt, an abhorrent state of affairs. One of the fellah's maxims is that 'debt is a worry at night and a humiliation during the day'.

# THE FELLĀḤÎN OF UPPER EGYPT

places his family would at once lose their position, and they would be looked down upon as nobodies. To our Western ideas such restrictions are apt to be regarded as a form of tyranny, but it is not a fair judgment. Seclusion is partly a sign of respect among Egyptians, and indicates the value that the men put upon their womenfolk. Most of the women have unfortunately a difficult and dangerous temperament, which, until they have learnt self-control, and have been inspired with higher ideals, makes them anything but an elevating influence in village society.

Though theoretically they are supposed to be entirely in subjection to the male sex, in practice they can, and often do, maintain a very firm hold on their husbands. I have known many men who are in mortal terror of their wives. Indeed, I am often inclined to think that it is the poor oppressed Egyptian *man* who has a claim to my sympathy, and that the over-ruled, oppressed wife is somewhat of a myth.

More often than not a man marries a girl from his own village, the favourite marriage being with a daughter of his father's brother. On the smallest provocation, some imagined slight, for example, a girl will run off to her father's or brother's house, and remain there until her husband, from fear of mischief being made against him in the village by his wife's relations, is induced to agree to do whatever his wife demands of him. She may require him to buy her gold earrings, a nose-ring, an anklet, or fine clothes, and, though a poor man, he may feel obliged to purchase one or more of these articles for fear of what his wife may do. Many men have run into debt for such reasons.

A man of my acquaintance, who owns a certain amount of land and is by way of being one of the rather superior people of his village, divorced his wife a year or two ago. She was quite a decent woman, but, her relations being poor, she had no land of her own, and, moreover, her husband's brother had died, bequeathing his widow a *feddān* (acre) of land and a little money. My acquaintance had his eye on this land, which was family property, belonging originally to his father, and the only way he could obtain it was by marrying his brother's widow. He did not want to have two wives, for it is expensive to keep up such an establishment; also, monogamy is becoming much more common in Egypt, and to have more than one wife is looked upon as rather barbarous even among the peasants. The only thing to do was to get rid of his first wife.

423 425 426 Small properties do not result solely from the subdivision of inheritances, but also from the acquisition of tiny plots as money becomes available. The fellah is so hungry for land that he buys it, more often than not, at a ruinous price; this is also partly because he buys only a few *kirats* at a time. In order to pay for it he supplements his savings by contracting a debt.

423 425 426 556 The demand is so high that the lots are sold for the best price offered, and, in forced sales, by auction. Here is an example of what may happen. Ten feddans are on sale for L.E. 400. A dozen fellaheen join together to buy them at that price, and divide them up among themselves. But a rich landowner of the neighbourhood gets wind of the business. He arrives a few hours before the sale and sits down at a café in full view of everybody. He boasts openly that he is ready to buy the lot at no matter what price. The fellaheen, threatened with disappointment, come up and beg him to withdraw, offering money as compensation. He lets them plead, bargains with them, then pockets his gains and leaves the village, in high glee at the success of his stratagem, which he will repeat when opportunity offers. The fellaheen, who have given him L.E. 10 for nothing, think the bargain good.

## The Government

656 [312] The Government, by its control of the land, and still more of the water, is supreme over capital and labour, and over the peasant class. As master of the irrigation system, it assumes for the fellah all the power and importance of the Nile. The more the State regulates the river, the greater the dependence on it of both soil and men of the soil.

As Egypt is an agricultural country, almost every Government organisation is, in the long run, giving orders to the fellah. In industry and in the large towns, the Government willingly entrusts the public services to private enterprise. In agricultural matters, on the contrary, it assumes many functions which in other countries are undertaken by private persons. So much so that for the rural population the Government is a kind of overriding providence, while the fellah is regarded by the Government as a helpless child, who has constantly to be ordered about and protected from his own ignorance.

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465 the produce of the vegetable patch, or a present of maize.

*The Fellah as Share-Cropper*

427 As day labourer the fellah works on large properties, as
465 *métayer* or share-cropper on a small plot of five or at most ten feddans. Under this system the owner enters into partnership with the fellah as follows:

The owner pays the taxes and irrigation dues, provides the farm implements, cattle, seed and manure. The fellah, as head of a family, provides labour for all the year's crops, from ploughing to harvest. For this he receives a fifth or a quarter of the yield of his plot. He may also bear half the expenses, in which case he takes half the crop. The contract is always verbal, and varies in detail.

This system involves no risk as it guarantees the owner a maximum of work, and the fellah his livelihood. It cannot, however, be very profitable to the fellah, because even if he labours continuously with every possible aid from his family he cannot manage to work more than five feddans. At the end of the year he has only the produce of one or one and a quarter feddans, that is to say about L.E. 12, for the efforts of his whole family over twelve months. In a bad year he will have less to show even than this. Finding
● [426] himself short of money before harvest, he goes to the owner for an advance to buy a *gallabiya*, or pay the expenses of a circumcision or a funeral. Such loans, with their interest, sometimes come to more than his part of the bargain. In this case he will not only receive nothing when accounts come to be settled, but in addition his work will be already pledged for the following year.

*The Fellah as Tenant Farmer*

427 To rent land outright is more adventurous. The tenant takes a field at a fairly high rent, from L.E. 6 to L.E. 22 a feddan according to the district; he pays all expenses, but keeps all the produce. The owner is responsible only for taxes. The lease is long, and usually covers the full rotation of crops over two or three years.

For example a fellah of the rich district of Mit-Ghamr rents two feddans at L.E. 20 for the agricultural year. He
[243 plants one with cotton, which produces 4 *cantars* (31), each
248] worth about L.E. 3½. The cotton goes to the owner, making L.E. 14 towards the rent. On the other feddan he sows

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

functions of grocer and druggist, café-keeper and innkeeper, money-lender and banker. He is the most Egyptianised of Europeans. He has no objection to living right in the village, among the fellaheen if not with them, and on them if not for them. He has brought into this closed world the gramophone and the games of the West. He robs the fellaheen and teaches them the use of narcotics, but he is unfailingly obliging. Though his rates are exorbitant, he will lend money on request without asking too many questions. He sells on credit, and when he buys he pays cash. The fellaheen appreciate his resourcefulness and enterprise.

Other less important but more popular figures stand out from the mass by virtue of some well-defined social functions long sanctified by custom.

First comes the *mizayen* or barber-surgeon. He is a very busy man. He shaves all the fellaheen of his district once a month, and crops their hair. Squatting in front of his client, who also squats, he takes a dish of water between his knees, and an old razor between finger and thumb, and quickly tidies up the face and head. An aching tooth? He will pull it out. Cupping, scarification, purge? No difficulty at all. He is responsible for public health, and therefore performs vaccinations, and notifies deaths to the *'omda*. The *mizayen* also officiates at circumcisions, and on the eve of this operation, or of a wedding, the hair-cutting takes on something of a ritual significance. He surrounds it with ceremony, and in so doing dignifies his art. For his varied services he is paid either in kind at harvest time or in milliemes.

The magician or sorcerer, with his charms, his formulae, his perfumed sachets and his magic remedies, would be a serious rival to the *mizayen*, were it not that his credulous customers are chiefly women. He may live in the village or merely pass through. It is to him that the country women have recourse in order to get the help of jinns, to cast spells, to counteract the evil eye or to ensure conception. No-one can make them believe that this holy man is just a rascal and an impostor. The more magic babble he puts into his rites, the more confidence they place in him. Indeed there are many instances in which trickery is not a sufficient explanation for the effects produced. A whole book might be written on witchcraft in the village, and its affinity

am an Egyptian". Though far more truly an Egyptian than most political figures, he is unconscious of belonging to a nation. This explains why, in the nationalist movement which swept over Egypt after the end of the first Great War until she obtained independence, the world of the fellaheen took no part. Nation, liberty, politics, these are words and notions beyond their understanding. 181 619

During the first Great War the English recruited a native contingent, the Labour Corps, to defend Egypt from the Turkish attack on the Suez Canal. These "volunteers" had to be enlisted by force, with even more difficulty than for other forced labour. The same lack of patriotism explains the distaste of the fellaheen for military service. The 24,000 soldiers of the Egyptian Army are almost all recruited from among them. In practice the law of 1902 does not apply in all its rigour except to them. Government officials and their sons; only sons, eldest sons whose fathers are dead, helpless, or over sixty; students; ministers of religion; and invalids are all exempt. 702 464 619

A man liable to service is at the mercy of the lot between the ages of 19 and 27. When the lot falls on him he is enlisted for five years. To ensure his rejection he may put out one of his eyes, or cut off a couple of fingers. He will get into debt to buy himself off from military service, or register as a student. If he can, he will hide or escape. As many as 35% of the recruits shirk their service. 702 [164]

When there is no way out, and he cannot avoid leaving home to join the army, the family receives condolences and abandons itself to mourning as if for a bereavement. To leave the village is like going abroad. *Partir, c'est mourir.* "Enlistment in the army is the passport to town life. Everything in the countryside grieves and protests — ox, plough, *saqia*, *gamoosa* and all" (Guindi). [152]

The conscript will be sadly missed on the land. It is not surprising that the fellaheen prefer to pay twenty or even a hundred pounds to avoid service, even if they are to be burdened with debt for a very long time. 702 426

This is not to say that they make bad soldiers. The fellaheen are men that know how to handle a gun, and the victorious armies of Mohamed Aly and Ibrahim Pasha were composed of them. That is ancient history, but it 702

Because the fellah lives entirely in the present, he is neither hurried, nor curious, nor ambitious. He is mild and peaceable because he is patient, and patient because he is subject to men and events, and for these very reasons he is, like the Nile, indifferent rather than idle. He feels no need for constant activity. His mind is passive and fatalistic; he takes things as they come. 181 183

At times, however, some fact breaks suddenly through the confused atmosphere of his mind, through this mist that protects him from excess of knowledge or action — as from suicide — and goads him into activity. Then he reacts on the impulse of the moment, without discrimination or sense of proportion, without reckoning the importance of what has happened or thinking of the consequences of what he is doing. His neighbour pinches some of his harvest, a duck, or a fowl. Someone diverts his irrigation water or lets a *gamoossa* loose on his grazing. His son is bullied by another boy or his wife insulted by some other woman. A friend delays too long in returning a few borrowed piastres, or looks too long at his wife. Someone brings a complaint or accusation against him. Then the same fellah who is so patient under the injustice or cruelty of his superiors shows himself to his equals as touchy as can be. The occurrence may be of little or no importance, but it seems to him intolerable and stings him to revenge. He reacts violently, and infects others with the same passion as himself. Human life counts for nothing. 181 152 577 578 [685] [683 426]

In Upper Egypt, when a man quarrels with another he will try to attack him on the spot with any weapon he can lay his hands on. The fellah of the Sa'id is like a volcano which will erupt when least expected. 579 181 578

More usually the revenge is cunningly dissembled, and carried out by night with endless precautions. The enemy will be set upon from behind, in the maize fields; or if the man himself is not attacked his crop will be burnt, his *gamoossa* poisoned, or his corn scattered over the neighbouring fields.

Though the fellah will put up with a multitude of wrongs from his masters when at work, he is not afraid to stand up to them if the dispute is about women, for women and land are the points on which he is most susceptible. Then there 181 183 578 562

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compulsory, met with little success, and had to be suppressed after the last war.

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In 1902, after a trial by the National Bank, the Agricultural Bank of Egypt was founded, with the object of providing loans to small farmers at the legal rate of 9%. It opened agencies in all the principal townships, and enjoyed the privilege of being repaid before the taxes. At first it was a success. But the formalities were too complicated, the agencies too far from borrowers in the small villages, the date of repayment too rigidly insisted on, and the whole transaction too public. The fellah preferred to fall back on his moneylender, who was on the spot.

The success of the Agricultural Bank might indeed have been greater if the application of the Five-Feddan Law, by making mortgages impossible, had not dealt it a fatal blow. From the date of this Act the bank abandoned its earlier policy, and in 1930 it went into liquidation.

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The system was revived in an improved form in 1931, with the creation of the *Crédit Agricole d'Egypte*, founded by the Government with the co-operation of the big Cairo banks. To assist its operations the Government agreed to advance a million pounds and suspended the Five-Feddan Law in its favour.

The new institution gives advances to small-holders at 7% and to co-operative societies at 5% up to the amounts required for cultivation and harvesting, for the purchase of cattle, and for the improvement of land. It sells selected seeds and manures on credit to small tenant farmers and share-croppers, and advances them up to 80 % of the value of their crops, if these are deposited in the bank's *shoonas*, scattered all over the country. Understanding the fellah mentality, and profiting by the experience of the Agricultural Bank, it has decentralised its operations, leaving fairly wide powers of discretion to its agents, who go into the villages and reduce formalities to a minimum. It has thus won the confidence of the fellaheen and drawn many of them out of the clutches of the moneylenders, without itself suffering in any way from its own creditors. Nevertheless, it is already tending more and more to help the middle and larger landowners.

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The reader will have noted the special conditions granted by the *Crédit Agricole* to co-operative societies. These have

474 existed in Egypt for the last twenty years. The Government recognised them officially by the Law of 1923 (amended in 1927). It made advances to encourage their development and enable them to buy seed, manure, cattle, and implements, on better terms. Since 1931 it has entrusted this task to the *Crédit Agricole*. The change was successful. The number of societies grew from 147 in 1927 to 703 in 1935, and the number of co-operators rose from 12,298 to 71,000. In 1935 L.E. 836,000 was borrowed from the *Crédit Agricole* by 544 of these societies, the others being financed by private capital.

The advantages of these societies are evident. They do away with shady middlemen, systematise production and prices, improve both quality and quantity, and buy and sell at the best conditions (*). They have a clearly-defined aim of social service. "The various types of co-operative societies, put aside part of their profit every year to be spent in the various social services, village reform, education, hygiene" and so on.

It is in Lower Egypt, and especially Beheira, that these organisations have spread most. In spite of their success they leave untouched the vast majority of the fellaheen, especially those whose need is greatest and among whom the co-operative spirit is least developed.

656 The Government has passed a number of measures for the protection of these grown-up children :

[426] (1) The law against moneylenders (1896) by which the usurer, who goes too far, is made liable to a heavy fine.

[659] (2) The establishment of *kaldka* cotton markets (1912) in which weights are checked and sales governed by current prices at the Bourse.

[651] (3) The suppression of the tax on date-palms (1920).

(4) The suppression of the *ghafflr* tax, a watchman's toll which the fellaheen had to pay (1936).

744 657 If the fellah's economic activity needs to be organised and controlled by the paternal providence of the State, how much more do his health and his housing ! But here planning is far ahead of achievement. The question is whether to begin by providing all villages with drinking-water, or first to build model villages whenever possible.

expense, which amounts to about L.E. 70. These *gallabiyas* are not distributed anyhow, but fitted individually by the *ndzer's* wife, according to height and taste. At the Bairam festival there is a general distribution of meat, four pounds to a person, which costs about L.E. 40. Fat is also given to those who have no *gamoosa*. The fruit crop of the orchard is shared out at intervals. Whenever a child is born, a set of baby-clothes is provided.

When a fellah gets into debt, the *ndzer* advances him what he needs, without any trickery. The man pays it off by days of work.

Drinking-water is supplied to all from a pump at the entrance to the *'ezba*. A dozen lavatories and two shower-baths have been set up near the mosque.

This beautiful mosque, built by the Christian landowner, who also provides for an *imam*, brings together the menfolk of the *'ezba* and its surroundings. A *kuttab* was attached to it, but this has been closed since the opening of an *ilzamiya* school in the next village.

Fellaheen who go sick are cared for by the *ndzer*, who has by practice become something of a doctor, or sent to the Government doctor at Mit Ghamr. The wife of this kindly manager, when she was there, used to take care of the people herself, wash their eyes, and give them clothes and good habits too. For twenty-four years she stood at her husband's side.

When she died, they showed that fellaheen are not incapable of gratitude. They discovered by childish tricks, in spite of efforts to keep the truth from them, that she was seriously ill in Cairo. Thirty of them piled into a couple of taxis and drove off to the hospital. It was like a public demonstration, people said. Later, when they saw the *ndzer* and his children coming back in mourning from the cemetery, their grief was as spontaneous as it was general.

This mother left her daughter an example to follow. And follow it she does, with her gentleness and good temper and her mastery of Arabic. It is easy to see how much they love her, those unloved peasants.

This experiment in social justice has not made either the owner or the *ndzer* any the poorer. The estate is one of the most productive in Egypt, and all its products have won prizes at agricultural exhibitions.

113 be found there, sometimes not a single inhabitant."
162 THE STORY OF EGYPT, by 'Abd-el-Latif, a 14th-century Arab doctor of Baghdad.

12. In England in 1941, for example, the agricultural population numbered only four million. Since 1900 alone, a quarter of a million persons have left agriculture.

113 13. Figures given by M. Gourou, in his PAYSANS DU DELTA TONKINOIS, Paris, 1936.

14. Out of the 283,232 persons owning land in this province 216,861 own less than a feddan apiece. The average is two fifths of a feddan.

15. A French banking-company founded in 1880 for advances against land. The CRÉDIT AGRICOLE is a newer Government foundation for similar purposes.

16. THE CADASTRAL SURVEY OF EGYPT, 1891-1907, by Capt. H.G. Lyons, Ministry of Finance, Cairo, 1908.

17. The word WAKF comes from an Arabic root meaning to stop, or be at a standstill. The nearest English word is probably trust, or entail.

18. The result of this disproportionate increase is that the average held by each small owner has grown less. In 1897 owners of less than five feddans held an average of 1.58 feddans. Today the average is 1.82 feddans a head, which is ridiculously small. So the development of rural property in Egypt has affected small holdings only, increasing their number while lessening their average area, whereas large and medium-sized estates have remained almost unchanged, and continue to cover vast areas. See LES GRANDES LIGNES DE L'ECONOMIE AGRICOLE DE L'EGYPTE, by J. Anhoury, Government Press, Cairo, 1941, p. 64.

19. P. Jouguet, L'EGYPTE AU IIIe SIÈCLE, in PRÉCIS D'HISTOIRE D'EGYPTE, Vol. I, p. 393.

20. LE LABOURAGE EN EGYPTE, in BULLETIN DE L'INSTITUT D'EGYPTE, Cairo, 1916, pp. 83-127.

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and even prejudicial to their health": LA PATRIE (a Cairo newspaper), 10th November 1936.

26. AL-MUSSAWAR, Cairo, 28th June 1935.

[651] 27. "Every male above 9 years and below 25 years of age who is accustomed to agricultural labour may be levied for such labour by the administrative authorities at the wage customary in the locality."

[249 136] 28. GELECHIA GOSSYPIELLA SAUNDERS. The boll-worm properly so called is EARIAS INSULANA, and the leaf-worm, also a great pest, is PRODENIA LITURA F.

[465] 29. Proclamation No. 258 of 1942 fixed the minimum wage for this type of work at 7½ piastres a day.

30. Between 1942 and 1945 some rises occurred in wage rates, while the official cost-of-living index rose to 300 (1939-100).

[249] 31. One feddan produces from 4 to 5 CANTARS of cotton, according to the quality of the seed. In 1936 there was a record average of 6.16 CANTARS.

32. AL-AHRAM, 3.11.36. It should be noted that over-population affects the relation between supply and demand.

[426 735] 33. The solution proposed by the authorities is that the Government should take over debts to money-lenders and deduct a small amount from the fellah's annual revenues until they are paid off.

34. Ernest Chantre : RECHERCHES ANTHROPOLOGIQUES EN EGYPTE : Rey, Lyons, 1904.

35. J. de Morgan : RECHERCHES SUR L'ORIGINE DES EGYPTIENS : Leroux, Paris, 1909.

36. Dr. Abbas Pasha: FIXITÉ DE LA RACE DANS LA FEMME EGYPTIENNE : BULLETIN OF ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY, Cairo, Vol. VI, pp. 461-70.

37. Vonderheyden : LE HENNÉ CHEZ LES MUSULMANS DE L'AFRIQUE DU NORD : JOURNAL DES AFRICANISTES, Paris, 1934, Vol. IV, pp. 55-61 and 179-202.

[302] 38. There are various formulae, but the commonest have an antimony base, with an admixture of charcoal, lamp-black or soot.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

## 49.

×539

*Raiyān ʿya figl aḫḍar!*
*Feddān we-nuṣṣo-mkassar!*
*Laʾetni gamʾle betitmaḫṭar,*
*we-saḥabt ginebi we-ḥmāri*
*we-nādēt, ma ḥaddš gāni.*

Fresh, green radishes!
An acreful and half of it broken!
A beauty met me, swaying as she walked,
But I drew my baskets and my donkey away,
[And called but no one came to me.]

2. A field, of about one and one twentieth acres, full of them, and half of them broken in pulling them, — the radishes were so tender (according to Maḥmûd). Vollers suggests another interpretation: "One acre of the field is cultivated, but half of this acre is encumbered with debts (mekassar)."

4. The two large baskets, which are strapped or tied together, and hang on either side of the donkey. According to Maḥmûd this line means: I withstood the temptation because I was so anxious to bring the radishes fresh to you.

5. The connection between this line and the preceeding ones, is not very clear. It is possible that the line does not belong here. It occurs also in No. 74 and there in the proper place.